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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4667

INFO RUEHDD/NATO COLLECTIVE

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1472

RUFHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 7364

RUEHRUC/AMCONSUL MILAN 2671

RUFRRSHH/AMCONSUL NAPLES 2116

ZEN/AMCONSUL FLORENCE POUCH

ZEN/AMCONSUL GENOA POUCH

ZEN/AMCONSUL PALERMO

RUFLSHA/AMCONSUL TRIESTE 5845

ZEN/AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

BT

S E C R E T ROME 24971

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: ASEC, PARM, PGOV, IT

SUBJECT: MASSIVE "PEACE" DEMONSTRATION PLANNED

- IN ROME OCTOBER 22

REF: ROME 24889

1. (C) SUMMARY

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ROME IS BRACING FOR WHAT MAY BE A MASSIVE ANTI-INF DEMONSTRATION OCTOBER 22. IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE PIDDLING SHOWS SINCE THE LARGE DEMONSTRATION TWO YEARS AGO. ONE OF THE DEMONSTRATION ROUTES PASSES ONLY 50 FEET BEHIND THE EMBASSY; WE ARE TRYING TO GET THAT CHANGED (REFTEL). THE PRESS, THE POLICE AND EMBASSY COMMUNIST PARTY CONTACTS ARE CONCERNED THAT MORE RADICAL ELEMENTS COULD TAKE OVER ASPECTS OF THE DEMONSTRATION AND PROVOKE DETOURS, SEPARATE DEMONSTRATIONS AND EVEN VIOLENCE. THE EMBASSY IS TAKING PRECAUTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) PRESS REPORTS CIRCULATING IN ROME OCTOBER 20 INDICATE THAT AS MANY AS 150,000-250,000 MAY SHOW UP FOR SATURDAY AFTERNOON'S DEMONSTRATION. THEY ARE REPORTEDLY COMING ON 2,000 BUSES, 11 SPECIAL TRAINS, AND ON A SHIP (FROM SARDINIA). ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE MARCHES WILL CONCLUDE AT THE TRADITIONAL BUT OUT-OF-THE-WAY PIAZZA SAN GIOVANNI LATERANO.

3. (S) THERE IS CONSIDERABLE CONCERN HERE THAT THE ROUTES WILL NOT BE FOLLOWED SO EXACTLY. THE PRESS REPORTS NOTE THAT, WHILE THE PRINCIPAL ORGANIZERS OF THE MARCH WANT A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION, THERE ARE SOME WHO MIGHT PROVOKE ISOLATED INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE. OTHERS WANT TO MARCH RIGHT PAST THE SOVIET AND AMERICAN EMBASSIES OR DEMONSTRATE AT THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING. A USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE REPORTS THAT MEMBERS OF AUTONOMIA ARE PLANNING PROVOCATORY ACTIONS AGAINST VARIOUS INSTALLATIONS INCLUDING THE US EMBASSY. EVEN THE LEFTIST PARTIES AMONG THE SPONSORS OF THE MARCH (COMMUNISTS, PROLETARIAN DEMOCRACY, AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF PROLETARIAN UNITY) DISAGREE ON TACTICS. IN FACT, THE COMMUNISTS ARE TRYING HARD TO DEEMPHASIZE THE EXTENT OF PCI ORGANIZATION BEHIND THE MARCH TO MAKE IT LOOK MORE LIKE A BROAD-BASED EFFORT.

5. (C) POLICE OFFICIALS EARLIER TOLD US THAT THEY WERE PREPARING FOR UP TO 100,000-150,000 MARCHERS, INCLUDING A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE FROM THROUGHOUT EUROPE, ESPECIALLY GERMANY. THEY CONFIRMED THAT THEY

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WERE TRYING TO ENSURE THAT THE MARCH WOULD BE WELL CONTROLLED AND KEPT AWAY FROM THE CENTER OF ROME. THE NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF TOLD US LAST WEEK THAT PERHAPS 4,000 "AUTONOMISTS" FROM THE NORTH MIGHT COME TO ROME. THE POLICE NOW WORRY WHAT THEY MIGHT BE PLANNING IN THE WAY OF SIDE DEMONSTRATIONS, REROUTING, AND VIOLENCE.

6. (C) COMMUNIST PARTY INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR GIANCARLO PAJETTA TOLD POLCOUNS AND POLOFF OCTOBER 19 THAT THE PARTY WAS ALSO VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE AUTONOMISTS AND OTHER RADICAL GROUPS. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT SOME WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE BEFORE PARLIAMENT, NOTING THAT THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT HAVE THE MARSHALS TO CONTROL THE "HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS" OF PEOPLE EXPECTED. HE EXPRESSED HIS DISDAIN FOR THE CONFRONTATION TACTICS USED BY FAR-LEFT DEMONSTRATIONS. THE PCI DIRECTORATE IS MEETING OCTOBER 20 TO DISCUSS HOW TO CONTAIN THIS THREAT TO THEIR CONTROL OF THE DEMONSTRATION.

7. (C) THE POLICE ARE PLANNING TO PROVIDE "FULL PROTECTION". NONETHELESS, THE LATEST NEWS THAT THE ROUTE COULD PASS NEARBY IS DISCONCERTING. THE EMBASSY ITSELF WILL BE TAKING THE FOLLOWING PRECAUTIONS:

- ALL MARINES WILL BE IN THE COMPOUND AND ON FULL ALERT
- THE SY STAFF WILL ALL BE PRESENT
- A REGULAR WEEKDAY COMPLEMENT OF PRIVATE GUARDS WILL BE ON DUTY, AND

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- ONLY ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY EMPLOYEES WILL BE ON DUTY.

8. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY JUST INFORMED US THAT THE ROUTING NEAR THE EMBASSY AS SCHEDULED WILL REMAIN, SINCE IT WAS THE RESULT OF A NEGOTIATION WITH THE EXPECTED 200,000 OR SO "PACIFIST" MARCHERS IN RETURN

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FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO POLICE THEMSELVES. THIS WE WERE TOLD WILL ENABLE THE POLICE TO TAKE CARE OF THE 2000-3000 "AUTONOMISTS" WHO ARE THE POSSIBLE TROUBLEMAKERS.

9. WE WERE ASSURED THAT THE EMBASSY WILL HAVE SOLID POLICE PROTECTION. THE SOVIET EMBASSY RECEIVED THE SAME ASSURANCES IN RESPONSE TO THEIR UNHAPPINESS OVER ROUTING CLOSE TO THEM.

10. COMMENT

CONSIDERING THE FAILURE OF ORGANIZERS TO GATHER MORE THAN A FEW HUNDRED OR FEW THOUSAND IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, A PROJECTION OF 200,000 SEEMS HIGH. IF THEY MAKE IT, THE DIFFERENCE PRESUMABLY WILL BE A GREATER COMMUNIST COMMITMENT AND/OR A GREATER EFFORT BY THE CATHOLIC AND TRADE UNIONIST FORCES INVOLVED.

11. NO SIGNIFICANT DEMONSTRATIONS OUTSIDE OF ROME ARE EXPECTED THIS WEEKEND.

12. IF PLANS CHANGE, WE WILL REPORT FURTHER.  
BRIDGES

END OF MESSAGE

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